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COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND COORDINATION
Thirty-fourth session (Part II)
29 August-16 September 1994
Agenda item 8

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE SECOND PART OF ITS THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Tae Hyun YOO (Republic of Korea)

Addendum

REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Establishment of a transparent and effective system of accountability and responsibility

1. At its 18th and 20th meetings, on 2 and 6 September 1994, the Committee considered the report of the Secretary-General on the establishment of a transparent and effective system of accountability and responsibility (A/C.5/49/1).

Discussion

2. Delegations welcomed the report of the Secretary-General and took note of the actions taken and planned. There was broad agreement that the report addressed various aspects of resolution 48/218.

3. While regretting the belated introduction of such reforms, delegations welcomed in particular the recognition in the report that the Secretariat worked to serve all the Member States and expressed the belief that that approach should become the core of the new management culture of the United Nations.

4. Some delegations agreed that the regulations and rules of the Organization needed consolidation and simplification. While agreeing on the need to provide programme managers with greater flexibility, one delegation expressed the view that changes in rules and regulations could not be an end in themselves: such changes should be considered on their own merit and in the context of pertinent resolutions of the General Assembly, as appropriate.

5. Some delegations noted that the Staff Regulations and Rules needed revision to provide a system of rewards for good workers and sanctions for poor performance.

6. Delegations took note of the progress of reforms already implemented as well as the status of those due to begin during 1995.

7. Delegations welcomed the Secretariat's statement that the cost of implementation of the proposed reforms would be more than offset by the resulting overall savings. In that respect, those delegations recognized the benefits that would flow from the successful implementation of the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS).

8. Some delegations emphasized the need to review United Nations procurement procedures and, in that regard, noted that an informal high-level group of experts would work with the Departments of Administration and Management and Peace-keeping Operations to review and simplify current rules and procedures.

Conclusions and recommendations

9. The Committee welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the establishment of a transparent and effective system of accountability and responsibility in the United Nations Secretariat.

10. The Committee endorsed the measures to be taken by 1 January 1995 and recommended that future proposals should be submitted as appropriate to the General Assembly through the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ).

11. The Committee agreed that an organizational chart was essential and welcomed the Secretariat's intention to produce one.

12. The Committee expressed appreciation for the undertaking that the staff and their representatives would be kept involved, as appropriate, at all stages of the reform process.

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Addendum

REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Restructuring of the Secretariat

1. At its 23rd and 25th meetings, on 9 and 12 September 1994, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the report of the Secretary-General on the restructuring of the Secretariat (A/49/336).

Discussion

2. Most delegations welcomed the report of the Secretary-General and his initial overall assessment of what had been achieved through the restructuring of the Secretariat, which indicated that restructuring appeared to be leading in the right direction. Some delegations, however, expressed concern about those actions already taken by the Secretary-General that did not have a mandate from Member States. Some delegations, however, expressed the view that the actions already taken by the Secretary-General were within his prerogative as Chief Administrative Officer of the Organization, under Article 97 of the Charter of the United Nations.

3. It was generally felt by delegations that restructuring was an ongoing process in which consultation with Member States was necessary. Though the report contained less analysis than some Member States would have liked, it was recognized by most delegations that the time that had elapsed since the measures had come into force was still relatively short in terms of a full and definitive evaluation. Time should be given to allow the changes to become established and to enable staff members to become acquainted with them. Accordingly, some delegations believed that there was no need at the present time to request a further report on the subject. While recognizing the difficulties for an in-depth evaluation of the restructuring process, some other delegations reiterated the need for a new report which would address (a) the impact of the restructuring process on programmes of the Organization; and (b) measures taken to adjust the restructuring of the Secretariat in accordance with the decisions of the relevant intergovernmental bodies.

4. Some delegations, in full agreement with the statement of the Secretary-General that periods of reform must alternate with periods of consolidation, believed that it was time for a phase of consolidation where no major structural changes would be effected in the near future, so as to allow the new structure to function properly and for a fuller analysis and assessment of the results of restructuring.

5. Some delegations expressed the view that restructuring of the Secretariat should be regarded as one of the components in the general overhaul of the United Nations system; others included the new system of accountability and responsibility and the new format of the medium-term plan.

6. Delegations welcomed the enhanced effectiveness of the Secretariat in peace-keeping and other field operations, and the improved planning and evaluation capacity in that regard at Headquarters. Some believed that this capacity should be focused more on long-term planning. Some delegations accepted the rationale behind the transfer of the Electoral Assistance Division to the Department of Peace-keeping Operations. However, some delegations objected to that transfer and expressed the view that this issue must be considered by the relevant intergovernmental bodies.

7. In the economic and social sectors, some delegations welcomed the integration of environmental concerns into economic development programmes and decentralization efforts to make the activities of the regional commissions more responsive to the needs of Member States. They expressed the view that, in the consolidation phase, improved coordination was necessary among the three departments concerned with economic and social affairs. Some delegations expressed the view that the three departments created to deal with the economic and social sectors should be treated in the same way by the Secretary-General, in terms of allocating human and financial resources, as those created to deal with peace-keeping, political and humanitarian affairs.

8. A number of delegations expressed reservations about the decision of the Secretary-General to request the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme to assist him in enhancing policy coherence within the United Nations and overall coordination of operational activities for development. They expressed the view that this issue should be considered by the relevant

intergovernmental bodies. Some delegations, however, welcomed the request of the Secretary-General that the Administrator of the Programme assist him in ensuring policy coherence and enhancing coordination.

9. Delegations welcomed the effort of the Secretary-General to establish an integrated, streamlined Department of Administration and Management and to improve the management culture of the Secretariat.

10. Delegations also welcomed the consolidation of all audit, inspection, monitoring, evaluation and investigation functions in one office, for the enhancement of internal oversight in the Secretariat of the United Nations.

11. Delegations appreciated the decision of the Secretary-General to strengthen training and retraining of staff members in order to improve Secretariat services to Member States.

Conclusions

12. The Committee took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the restructuring of the United Nations Secretariat.